

The Treehouse by **Millie55**

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Summary: Will finds a safe haven away from the traumas of the upside down. Prompt - Write about a secret treehouse hideaway.

The Treehouse

Deep in the woods of Hawkins, placed high up in the arms of the trees is a small house only seen in the winter as in the hot summers vibrant leaves were the perfect camouflage. Not many knew of the rundown tree-house, it's once bright wood now faded by the sun and weathered by the rain. Those who did know of the secret hideaway did not know of its origins as it seemed to have rested there long before it's time.

Will Byers and Mike Wheeler had first discovered it when they were young- it was one of their many adventures. They had been running through the woods, the trees decorated in hues of red, yellow and orange as fall began its slow transition into winter. The frame was an ugly brown that caught their curious gaze, and although the risk of falling off the ladder hammered into the tree bark was great, the two had taken the risk anyway. There, resting on the creaking floorboards they found treasures: old comic books with the color running from the pages from years of exposure, action figures rusted from rain, even an old jacket that held its shape and only had the color fade from the sun.

This tree-house was their safe haven. When things got bad, the boys would run there and cry if needed or play just to keep their minds from falling on the stress of childhood. As their friendship grew with Lucas and Dustin, and their focus fell on arcade games, and Dungeons and Dragons the tree-house was forgotten- this time with their own toys littering the floor for the next generation of Hawkins children to discover.

It was only after Will's first experience with the upside down that his memories of the tree-house were recollected. When his mother became caught up at work, and Jonathan was distracted by Nancy and Steve, Will sought out the refuge that hung high up in the trees. He felt safe there, his denim jacket hanging off his shoulders, converse covered in dirt and radio that assured his connection to his brave clan of friends resting against his ankle. Here, in the safety of his tree house, he wasn't the zombie boy- he was just Will Byers.

He spent vast amounts of time there with his sketchbook and

crayons, drawing his experiences with the upside down, in trying to cope with such tragedies. No one understood to what extend the darkness still haunted him- that the memories and flashbacks the doctor claimed he was having, were not flashbacks at all. Will was torn between two worlds, and in both, he was haunted by the monsters of his the tree-house, however, Will was never pulled back into the darkness. He felt no fear here.

Arched over his pictures, wax dragging over the pages, he almost doesn't hear the call of his friends, asking him to join them at the arcade and asking how much money he had for the machines. Will contemplated not replying at all, and hiding among the leaves until the hands on his watch got dangerously close to the time his mother would return home. Instead, Will held the radio to his mouth as a hand fumbled with the change in his pocket. He would have to wait for his mother to come home to drive him, but his time spent at the arcade with his friends would put all their minds at ease.

Stuffing his belongings into his knapsack, Will climbed down from the tree carefully. Freshly fallen leaves crunched beneath his feet upon impact. Scared eyes scanned his surroundings in fear that somehow the Demogorgon would return and come for him. While he saw nothing, Will held onto the straps of his backpack and ran home. There he settled down on the couch with an action figure just as Jonathan walked up the driveway - no one would even know he was gone.